

Application Serial No. 10/081,994
Amendment Dated: February 4, 2004
Reply to Office Action Mailed: September 4, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of heating a packaged food product,
comprising:
providing a roller-type grilling machine;
providing a food product in a non-edible sealed package, said non-edible sealed package
comprising an elongate, substantially cylindrical tube, said food product contained
within said sealed package;
placing the non-edible sealed package on the grilling machine;
rotating the non-edible sealed package with the grilling machine; and
heating the product to a desired temperature on the grilling machine.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising pre-cooking
said food product prior to placement in said non-edible sealed package.
3. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a pair of end caps,
one on each end of the tube, at least one of the end caps configured to be removable by a
consumer for removing the food product from the tube.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, further comprising providing the end caps with a larger diameter than the diameter of the tube so that the end caps contact at least one heating element of the grilling machine and suspend the tube above at least one heating element of the grilling machine.

5. (original) The method of claim 3, further comprising providing at least one of the end caps with a secondary food chamber for containing a second food product.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising attaching a membrane to said at least one of the end caps for separating the secondary food chamber from the food product.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing an outer housing around said tube, said outer housing and said tube defining an annular space thereinbetween for receiving a plurality of roller bearings that allow the outer housing to rotate while the inner tube remains in a substantially upright position.

8. (currently amended) The method of 1, further comprising providing said non-edible sealed package with a substantially sealed bag within said tube, said food product being contained within said bag.

9. (currently amended) A method of vending a pre-packaged food product, comprising:
providing a roller-type grilling machine;
providing a pre-cooked food product in a non-edible substantially sealed package, said non-edible sealed package configured to be rotated and simultaneously heated by the grilling machine;
placing the non-edible sealed package on the grilling machine for rotating and heating the food product in the non-edible substantially sealed package;
rotating the non-edible substantially sealed package with the grilling machine;
heating the food product to a desired temperature on the grilling machine; and
selling the heated food product in the non-edible substantially sealed package to a consumer.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, further comprising heating said food product to a temperature of between approximately 90 and 230 degrees Fahrenheit.

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11. (original) The method of claim 9, further comprising heating said food product for a period of up to approximately six hours without significantly diminishing the freshness of the food product.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising providing a pair of end caps, one on each end of the sealed package, at least one of the end caps configured to be removable by a consumer for removing the food product from the non-edible sealed package.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising providing the end caps with a larger diameter than the diameter of the remainder of the non-edible sealed package so that the end caps contact at least one heating element of the grilling machine and suspend the remainder of the non-edible sealed package above at least one heating element of the grilling machine.

14. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising providing at least one of the end caps with a secondary food chamber for containing a second food product.

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15. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising attaching a membrane to said at least one of the end caps for separating the secondary food chamber from the pre-cooked food product.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising providing an outer housing around said non-edible sealed package, said outer housing and said sealed package defining an annular space thereinbetween for receiving a plurality of roller bearings that allow the outer housing to rotate while the inner non-edible sealed package remains in a substantially upright position.

17. (currently amended) The method of 9, further comprising providing said non-edible sealed package with a substantially sealed bag, said food product being contained within said bag.

18. (currently amended) A method of vending a pre-packaged food product on a roller-type grilling machine, comprising:
providing a food product in a non-edible substantially sealed package, said non-edible substantially sealed package configured to be positionable and simultaneously heated by a roller-type grilling machine;

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placing the non-edible substantially sealed package on the grilling machine for heating the food product in the non-edible substantially sealed package;
heating the food product to a desired temperature on the grilling machine; and
selling the heated food product in the non-edible substantially sealed package to a consumer.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising heating said food product to a temperature of approximately 90 to 230 _____ to _____ degrees Fahrenheit.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising providing said non-edible sealed package in the form of an elongate tube with a pair of end caps, one on each end of the elongate tube, at least one of the end caps configured to be removable by a consumer for removing the food product from the non-edible sealed package.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 20, further comprising providing the end caps with a larger diameter than the diameter of the remainder of the non-edible sealed package so that the end caps contact at least one heating element of the grilling machine

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and suspend the remainder of the non-edible sealed package above at least one heating element of the grilling machine.

22. (original) The method of claim 20, further comprising providing at least one of the end caps with a secondary food chamber for containing a second food product.

23. (original) The method of claim 22, further comprising attaching a membrane to said at least one of the end caps for separating the secondary food chamber from the food product.

24. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising providing an outer housing around said non-edible sealed package, said outer housing and said non-edible sealed package defining an annular space thereinbetween for receiving a plurality of roller bearings that allow the outer housing to rotate while the inner non-edible sealed package remains in a substantially upright position.

25. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising providing said non-edible sealed package with a substantially sealed bag, said food product being contained within said bag.

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26. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising configuring said non-edible sealed package to rest on ~~a~~ the roller-type grilling machine without being rotated thereby.

27. (currently amended) The method of claim 26, further comprising providing said non-edible sealed package with at least one recess on a bottom thereof for at least partially receiving a roller of ~~a~~ the roller-type grilling machine therein for holding the sealed package thereon.

28. (currently amended) The method of claim 27, further comprising providing said non-edible sealed package with a primary and secondary food chamber for containing two different food products.

29. (currently amended) The method of claim 27, further comprising means for releasing steam from said sealed package as said non-edible sealed package is heated.

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30. (original) The method of claim 18, further comprising heating said food product for a period of up to approximately six hours without significantly diminishing the freshness of the food product.

31. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, further comprising pre-cooking said food product prior to placing in said non-edible sealed package.